

DHCS NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA ISSUES \$56 MILLION IN PAYMENTS TO QUALIFIED CLINICS

More than 56,000 Employees Who Worked at Qualified Clinics During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Will Receive a Payment

SACRAMENTO — The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) issued \$56 million for one-time payments to more than 56,000 eligible employees who worked at qualified clinics during the COVID-19 public health emergency. These payments were included in Assembly Bill 204 (Chapter 738, Statutes of 2022) to help stabilize and retain the state's clinic health care workforce. Eligible employees will receive a \$1,000 payment.

"These payments are for clinic employees who cared for some of the most vulnerable and sickest patients during the pandemic," said **DHCS Director Michelle Baass**. "We value their service and are pleased that we can show our appreciation for their sacrifice and efforts."

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT: The payments recognize the contributions of California's clinic workforce during the pandemic and support the ability of qualified clinics to retain essential employees.

WHAT CLINIC EMPLOYEES ARE SAYING:

- **Chirag, Native American Health Center:** "The payment makes us feel appreciated and acknowledges the heroic efforts of our clinic team who, without hesitation, put their personal health and safety at risk to support needy members of our community. My organization is excited, grateful, and honored to provide this bonus to our valued employees."
- **Blanca, Universal Community Health Center:** "During the COVID-19 pandemic, my organization decided to open a school-based clinic to help bring needed health care services to a low-income community. Many of the patients who benefited were the families of students who held a distrust in health care professionals, particularly after misinformation was spread via social media regarding vaccines, home remedies and treatments for COVID, and more. My staff and I were able to educate patients and help increase vaccination rates for COVID and flu. We also offered much needed dental and behavioral health services. Being a single mother, the retention bonus will assist me in helping pay off my debts that accrued during the pandemic from being the primary caretaker for my sons, mother, and nephew."

- **Sanampreet, Achievable Foundation:** “The pandemic reinforced the fact that health care workers are indispensable to society. Sadly, we did lose some of our colleagues who worked selflessly on the frontlines. This recognition is more than just monetary. It’s a tribute to fallen heroes and a reminder for us health care workers of why we chose to work in health care in the first place and to continue making a difference.”

BACKGROUND: The \$56 million was paid to 272 federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), which includes tribal FQHCs and FQHC look-alikes, free clinics, Indian health clinics, and rural health clinics in California. Also included were tribal FQHCs and Indian health clinics located on tribal land adjacent to California that provide services to American Indians and their families who live in California. Qualified clinics applied on behalf of their eligible employees.

On March 28, 2023, DHCS began issuing [\\$1 billion](#) in one-time worker retention payments to 832,000 individuals who worked part- or full-time at qualifying hospitals and skilled nursing facilities during the COVID-19 public health emergency. These payments were included in Senate Bill 184 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2022).

For more information, visit the DHCS [website](#) or email cwsrp@dhcs.ca.gov.

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